



THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES

Comment on Objections 117

Allegra Spender MP

4 pages



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FEDERAL MEMBER FOR WENTWORTH

24th July 2024

The Redistribution Committee for New South Wales
Australian Electoral Commission
Level 13, 59-61 Goulbourn St
Haymarket, Sydney, NSW, 2000

By email: FedRedistribution-NSW@aec.gov.au

RE: COMMENTS ON OBJECTIONS TO PROPOSED NSW FEDERAL REDISTRIBUTION

Dear Redistribution Committee,

I am writing to contribute to the ongoing discussion around the proposed federal redistribution of electorates in NSW, specifically in relation to the proposed boundaries of the Division of Wentworth. These comments are further to my initial submission, dated October 27th 2023.

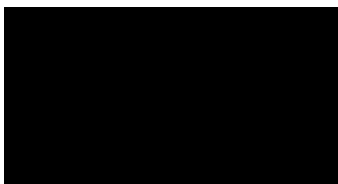
The following supplementary comments respond to Objection 708 by Mr Peter Mitchell, and set out my observations on the AEC's proposed changes to Wentworth's electoral boundaries released by the committee on the 14th of June 2024. The AEC's proposal is one that I support and which aligns with the requirements of the *Electoral Act*.

I believe the logic is compelling for the AEC's proposed expansion of Wentworth's western boundary to encompass the suburbs of Potts Point, Woolloomooloo, Darlinghurst and Kings Cross (the latter two of which are already partially inside the electorate), along with an expansion southwards to bring the suburb of Clovelly fully into the electorate. Overall, these changes respect the integrity of the affected communities and would restore the revised Division of Wentworth closer to the boundaries drawn between 2006 and 2016.

While Mr Mitchell has raised objections to the AEC's proposed changes, these objections do not have a strong logic to them, given the provisions of the *Electoral Act*. The following pages set out the reasons why, and the rationale for my support for the AEC's proposed changes.

I trust the information on the follow pages is of assistance in your deliberations, and I remain available should you wish to discuss this with me in more detail.

Kind regards,



Allegra Spender MP

Independent Member for Wentworth



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BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT.

As outlined in my original submission, Wentworth has 104,081 electors under the existing boundaries, 16,930 electors (14%) short of the current 46-seat quota of 121,011, and is projected to be 27,238 electors short of the estimated quota for 2028.¹

Given the geography of the Pacific Ocean to the east and Sydney Harbour to the north, there will always need to be an electorate in Sydney's eastern suburbs that encompasses this coastline. To meet the revised quota for 2028, the only viable option is therefore for Wentworth to increase in size as part of the redistribution. The practical ways to do this are to expand Wentworth to the west or to the south (since to cross the waters of Sydney Harbour or the Pacific Ocean would run contrary to the provisions in the *Electoral Act*).

Recognising these factors, the proposed changes to the divisional boundaries released by the Redistribution Committee on the 14th of June 2024 follows precisely this method, with the western edge proposed to extend to College Street and the southern edge down to Alison Road.

EXPANSION TO THE WEST.

The proposed western boundary of the electorate runs north-to-south from Mrs Macquarie's Road, alongside Art Gallery Road, College Street, east along Oxford Street and meets the existing boundary at South Dowling Street. This brings in the suburbs of Potts Point and Woolloomooloo into Wentworth, as well as Darlinghurst and Kings Cross (which are already partially inside the electorate).

Despite Mr Mitchell's assertions to the contrary, the proposed western expansion makes sense numerically, demographically, and geographically. Bringing these additional residential areas into the division adds 15,044 projected enrolments to Wentworth, which in combination with the southern border adjustment brings the electorate above the 2028 permissible minimum quota.²

Geographically, this proposal more closely reflects the 2006-2016 boundaries around Hyde Park and creates a clear delineation between the true Central Business District (to Hyde Park's west) – which falls within the Sydney electorate – and the eastern suburbs, which fall within Wentworth. This change has the added benefit of bringing a vibrant, demographically similar residential community together east of Hyde Park that was split by the previous 2016 redistribution. Among other characteristics, these suburbs together represent one of the thriving centres of Australia's LGBTQIA+ community, electors who under the proposed divisional boundaries would once again be reunited into a single division.

The footprint of this close-knit community can be seen not only by walking the streets, but through the striking similarities between the census characteristics of the adjacent suburb populations: high-income, renting, professionals, without children, degree qualified, and not religiously affiliated.

	Median Age	Single person HHs	CWNK families*	Renters	Weekly Med HHI	Professionals	Never Married	Bachelors degree	No Religion	LOTE at home
Australian Average	38	26%	39%	31%	\$ 1,746.00	24%	37%	26%	38%	25%
Elizabeth Bay	43	62%	78%	59%	\$ 2,116.00	47%	60%	58%	53%	18%
Potts Point	37	64%	81%	65%	\$ 2,054.00	41%	69%	52%	50%	22%
Woolloomooloo	39	51%	64%	71%	\$ 2,001.00	40%	62%	46%	47%	28%
Darlinghurst	37	52%	74%	62%	\$ 2,279.00	45%	67%	56%	54%	24%
Surry Hills	35	47%	72%	65%	\$ 2,308.00	46%	69%	55%	55%	31%
* Of the families in the suburb, the proportion that are couples without children										

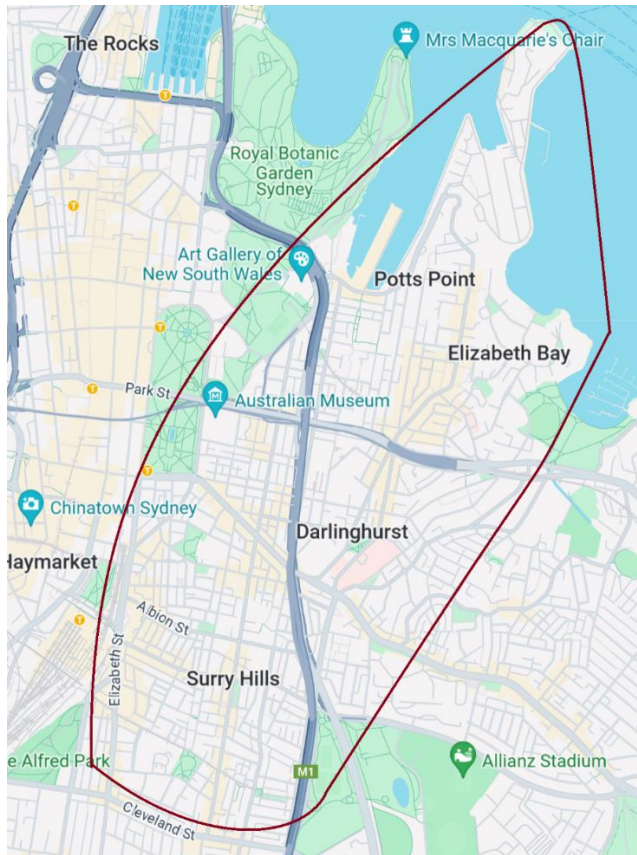
¹ AEC.gov.au (October 2023), Enrolment projections - New South Wales federal redistribution

² AEC.gov.au (October 2023), Enrolment projections - New South Wales federal redistribution



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With this community previously contained almost entirely within the 2006 boundaries, but subsequently split across two divisions by the redistribution of 2016, the proposed changes are an excellent way to restore the cultural and demographic continuity of the division while also satisfying the expansion required, something unacknowledged by the objection.

Surry Hills

Should further electors be required to bring Wentworth's projected 2028 enrolment closer to quota, per the above the most logical option for the committee's consideration remains incorporating the suburb of Surry Hills into the electorate. As identified, Surry Hills is part of a contiguous demographic and cultural grouping encompassing the neighbouring suburbs of Potts Point, Woolloomooloo, Darlinghurst, and Elizabeth Bay.

To achieve this incorporation would be straightforward, with a further extension in the south-west using Central Station and the accompanying railway line as a natural boundary between Wentworth and Sydney down to Cleveland St.

EXPANSION TO THE SOUTH.

The committee proposal moves the southern boundary of the electorate from King Street and Clovelly Road down to Alison Road. This option also makes sense numerically and demographically. Currently, the suburbs of Clovelly and North Randwick are split between Wentworth and Kingsford-Smith (along Clovelly Road), and a boundary along Alison Road brings them both more fully into the electorate. The communities of interest argument here is particularly strong for Clovelly, which shares strong ties with Bronte and Waverley. Additionally, the proposal keeps Moriah War Memorial College and Emanuel



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School – two Jewish day schools – inside the division. Wentworth has the highest Jewish population of any electorate in the country and most of the families whose children attend Moriah and Emanuel live in Wentworth, in particular in Rose Bay, Double Bay, and Vaucluse. In keeping with this, there are numerous synagogues located in Wentworth, for example Emanuel Synagogue (Woollahra), Central Synagogue (Bondi Junction), and Dover Heights Shule (Dover Heights) – to name just a few.

The impact of the proposed change increases the number of electors in Wentworth by a projected 8,590 in 2028, but is alone insufficient to meet expected quota requirements, making it an appropriate pair with the proposed western expansion.

While it is unclear from the objection exactly where Mr Mitchell's alternative boundary falls and which SA1s are proposed to be contained within it, a reasonable assumption may be that it follows Gardeners Road east, joining Rainbow Street and then on to Malabar Road. Such a boundary would have the effect of splitting the suburbs of Kingsford and South Coogee in half, with the residents of these areas distinct demographically from the rest of the existing division.

Analysis of the 2021 census data reveals these contrasts between the existing and proposed Wentworth footprint and with South Coogee in particular: this area's electors are slightly older, there are many more families with children, more married people, fewer professionals, more religious residents and fewer residents holding a university qualification. Extending the boundaries this far south would create an incongruous addition at the southern end of an otherwise logical cultural and demographic residential grouping east of the city.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The Division of Wentworth has existed since the very first federal election, but there is a need to expand its size to more closely align with the revised NSW quota. The AEC's proposed expansion to both the west and the south has the most compelling rationale of the available options to achieve this, keeping important communities of interest together, and has a logical additional expansion path to an adjacent group of SA1s should more electors be required. I trust this information is helpful to your deliberations.